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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5032  
INFO RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1362  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1193  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL  
RUCOWCV/CCGDSEVEN MIAMI FL//OLE/OI//

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000036

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR  
DRL  
S/CRS  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR  
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)  
TREASURY FOR MAUREEN WAFER

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AMGT](#) [HA](#)  
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR CODEL NELSON

¶1. This message is sensitive but unclassified -- protect accordingly.

Security Job 1  
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¶2. (SBU) As your visit approaches, the issue of security -- kidnapping and related criminality in the greater Port-au-Prince area -- continues to dominate public discourse in Haiti and daily preoccupy GoH and MINUSTAH officials. The level of crime in Port-au-Prince appears to have declined over the holiday period after a spike in kidnappings in late November-early December. Nevertheless the reopening of schools on January 8 served as a barometer of public apprehension regarding security, and many families are still assessing the level of security around the city before returning their children to school. At the direction of President Preval, MINUSTAH, with support from the Haitian National Police (HNP), beginning on December 22 with an operation in the gang-controlled slum in Cite Soleil initiated efforts targeting the most violent gang leaders. Your visit is a timely opportunity to ask GoH and MINUSTAH officials how they expect these operations to proceed.

Bilateral Affairs  
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¶3. (U) We remain far and away Haiti's most important bilateral partner and consult, cooperate, and offer assistance to Haiti on issues that impact nearly every aspect of governance and civil society. Our bilateral assistance in FY 07 totalled roughly \$ 200 million. Congress' recent passage of HOPE legislation granting preferences to Haitian textile imports further burnished the relationship and energized a significant segment of the business community preparing to take advantage of the new trade terms. We have launched a program of consultation with the government and private sector to take advantage of this opening.

¶4. (SBU) Nevertheless, some strains in the bilateral relationship have emerged. Prime Minister Alexis fans widespread criticism of our policy of repatriating of returning criminal deportees (and non-criminal deportees, a distinction GoH officials do not always make) to Haiti, claiming they are significant contributors to Haiti's

insecurity. We have repatriated roughly 300 Haitians since May, 2006, after having suspended repatriations in the sensitive period before national elections. The Preval administration has provided no concrete proof that deportees have been responsible for any particular crime since we resumed repatriations. We consult closely with the GoH to ensure the smoothest possible processing of deportees, and fund a \$1 million program to ease their re-integration into Haitian society.

15. (SBU) President Preval also chose the occasion of his "state of the nation" address to parliament on January 8 to identify the drug trade as the greatest cause of insecurity in Haiti and complained that "drug consuming nations" chiefly the United States, had not done their part in curbing the traffic through Haiti. President Preval further cited his signing during his first term of an illicit maritime drug traffic agreement with the U.S. allowing our forces to search suspected drug vessels in Haitian waters without prior notification to the Haitian government. In previous private conversations with USG officials, Preval expressed frustration that the U.S. does not dedicate more maritime assets to the waters between Haiti and South America, and our requests for more effort from the GoH to generate better counter-drug intelligence, and thus increase the effectiveness of our limited maritime assets, do not seem to have fully registered. Our Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) office and our military and police assistance programs directly aim to bolster Haitian justice, police, and coast guard capacity to foster counter-drug cooperation. Your visit with the president will be an opportunity to make the point that effective interdiction requires intensive collaboration, not simply unilateral efforts of the United States.

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President's Health  
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16. (SBU) A prostate cancer survivor, President Preval alarmed Haitians in December when he announced that his doctors in Cuba had found evidence of a return of cancer. Preval has since returned twice to Cuba for further tests and treatment and most recently announced that his doctors determined that his cancer had not returned. A series of public appearances and foreign travel have dampened the more hysterical rumors that he is terminally ill or seriously incapacitated. Nevertheless, speculation abounds in Haiti, and nervousness regarding the prospect of an early presidential succession colors much of the political discourse and maneuvering.  
SANDERSON